

CASE STUDY

Minimizing Conflict & Maximizing Opportunity

How Builtech used behavioral insights to improve hiring and reduce friction with leadership

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Executive Summary

Builtech is a general contracting and construction management firm founded in 2002. Now a 95-person company, Builtech has scaled and evolved over the decades, recently being voted a “Best Place to Work” in Chicago and Charlotte. As Builtech grew, so did its need for optimized staffing and cross-departmental alignment.

In 2019, Builtech found itself facing two key business challenges:

- Effectively staffing projects that leveraged individual strengths
- Better understanding how those individuals work best within teams

Builtech turned to The Predictive Index (PI), a talent optimization platform, to help them use behavioral insights to grow their team and improve collaboration, using two of PI’s most popular offerings, PI Hire and PI Inspire.

The following case study gives an inside look into Builtech’s challenges and offers a detailed analysis of how having nuanced insights into people’s strengths and weaknesses changed their business — for the better.

Builtech made a name for itself in the construction industry, and scaling its team effectively in a difficult market became a challenge for the growing company.

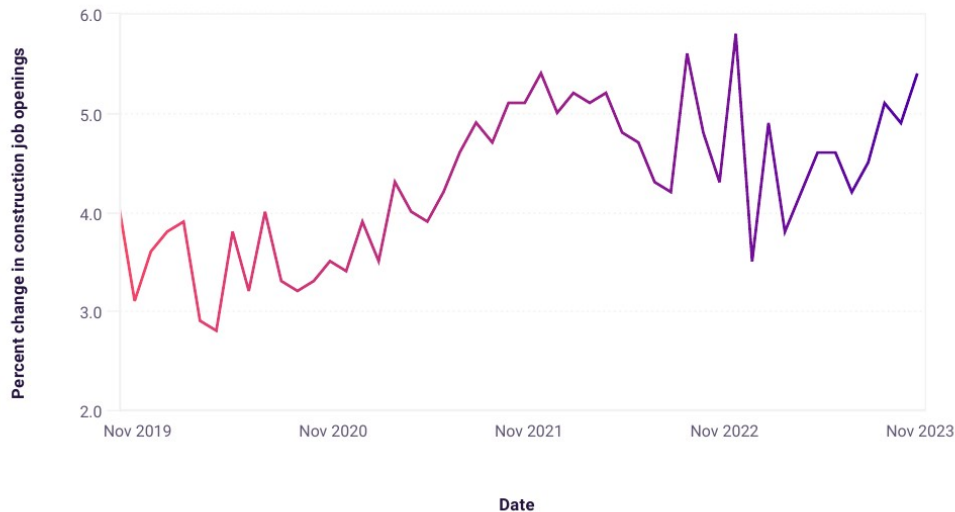
Labor availability in construction is declining: Eight in ten construction companies today report having difficulty filling hourly craft positions.

80%

of construction companies report difficulty filling hourly craft positions

Construction industry gets creative in addressing labor shortage

Construction industry gets creative in addressing labor shortage



Job openings in construction have been on a broadly upward trend over the last few years, making hiring to fill open roles on project teams difficult. Source: [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), "Job openings rates by industry, seasonally adjusted"

Job openings in construction have been on a broadly upward trend over the last few years, making hiring to fill open roles on project teams difficult. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Job openings rates by industry, seasonally adjusted."

Builtech is not the only company or industry facing these headwinds — nor the only one seeking solutions to uplevel its talent strategy.

Research on the general talent market shows:

12%

of employees strongly agree they are given a good onboarding program. 1

8 in 10

employees who felt undertrained from poor onboarding plan to quit soon. 2

4 hours

is the average amount of time per week that managers spend dealing with conflict, and the rate of people who report dealing with conflict at work "often" increased by 24% between 2008 and 2022. ³

\$8.8 trillion

in lost productivity is the cost to the world from employees feeling disengaged at work, which can result from a lack of understanding and too much conflict. ⁴

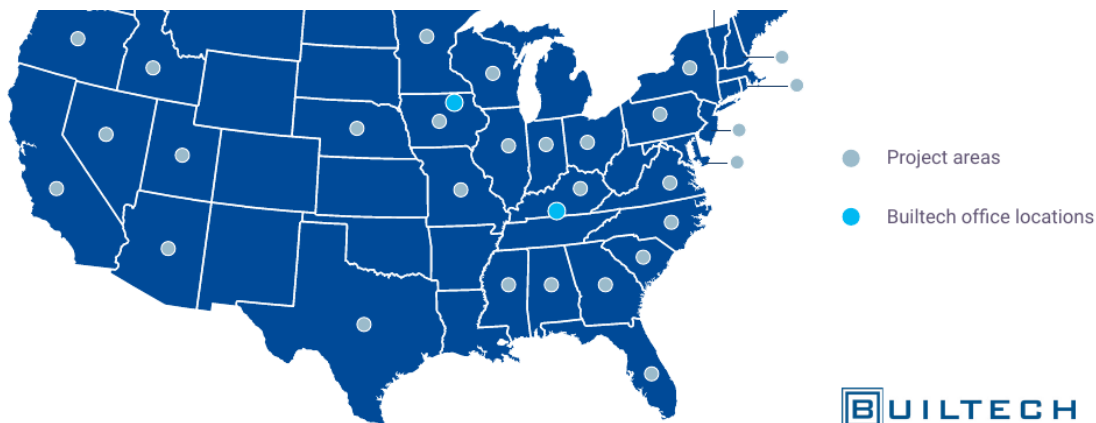
So, how did Builtech overcome internal and market challenges? Through gaining behavioral insight into their employees.

Dive into this case study to gain a comprehensive understanding of how insights into your people can drive business success — even if the talent market is under duress.

Who is Builtech?

Since 2002, Builtech has successfully planned, developed and constructed thousands of real estate projects for enterprises of all types and sizes. With two offices in Chicago and Charlotte and 15 to 30 active project sites throughout the country at any given time, Builtech has a wide-spanning team to support its success, growing 6% year-over-year since its founding. That geographic diversity and fast growth make cohesion across the organization hyper-critical.

Builtech's projects across nationwide



What challenges did Builtech see as the company scaled?

Builtech's growth brought new challenges. As the size of the business increased, it needed to find the right talent and adequately prepare them to address the organization's evolving project needs. At the same time, as the company grew, so did the need for better collaboration across the leadership team to build trust and strengthen communication.

Why turn to The Predictive Index?

Eager to bolster their company from the inside out, the executive team at Builtech turned to The Predictive Index, an award-winning talent optimization platform that helps companies better understand their employees so they can improve the workplace experience and boost their bottom line. When the partnership began in 2019, the initial goal was to help with hiring. But within six months, Builtech leadership quickly saw a trickle effect that positively impacted not only their new hires but also their project teams and tenured leadership teams.

Builtech believed getting more behavioral insights would help improve communication and collaboration. While they previously paid for another talent assessment, they found it took too long to complete, the readout was too long, and their team had a tough time interpreting the results, rendering it ineffective. They were intrigued with PI's talent assessment and how it could serve their team better, and leadership champions quickly jumped on its potential.

And they were right: Since implementing PI, 85% of Builtech's team members say they're 'highly engaged.'

Let's explore how they got there.

*While PI was critical in Builtech's path toward a stellar workplace, we'd be remiss not to mention that Builtech initiated a smart mix of changes that complemented PI. This included creating a new talent team, upleveling onboarding, adopting a construction workforce intelligence solution, leveraging PURSUIT risk scoring, adding annual mid-year reviews and 30/60/90 day check-ins, and initiating employee surveys.

85%

of Builtech's team members say they're 'highly engaged'

CHALLENGE #1: Hiring the right talent

What Builtech wanted to resolve

Finding the right talent fast enough was a huge pain point for Builtech, especially in the company's early days. "The way our business works is that we win a job, and then we have to mobilize very quickly," explains Alex Noon, a manager at Builtech. The company couldn't afford to take its time hiring, onboarding and acclimating new hires because it needed them on the job site — immediately.

Before PI, they hired quickly and onboarded new hires inconsistently. Without a thorough onboarding process or insights into people's talents or traits, the team missed some opportunities to upgrade and optimize its projects.

The Builtech team turned to PI Hire to help them fill their talent pipeline and improve their onboarding process so teams could get ramped up to deliver on project needs — quickly and effectively. Their goal with using PI Hire was to ensure they made the right hire and then leverage that data for stronger onboarding.

"Companies come to PI because they've been burned by making the wrong hire, or they've grown rapidly and need ways to streamline the hiring process," explains Michael Saia, PI's director of client services.

What is PI Hire?

PI Hire revolutionizes the hiring process through a streamlined three-step approach, improving the likelihood of making a successful hire. It empowers hiring teams to:

Identify the ideal behavioral traits for an open position.

Understand their candidate pipeline.

Secure the right fit, every time.

How PI was integrated to solve the challenge

Builtech folded PI Hire into its recruiting and onboarding processes in several key ways.

During screening

When Builtech was serious about a candidate, the hiring team had them take the PI assessment to see their natural tendencies. This was in an effort to, as the team at Builtech fondly and uniformly says, "get the right butts in the right seats." The result? Builtech now knows what behaviors ensure a hire is likely to be a success, Noon says — and how to go about looking for them. And that's what PI Hire is designed to do; as Saia explains, it aligns what drives an individual with the behaviors needed to succeed in the role. It also gives hiring managers and other team members a template for understanding those drivers.

During onboarding

While adding PI Hire to its toolkit, Builtech shifted from its one-day onboarding process to a more structured and sophisticated four-day onboarding experience. This included presentations from all departments to highlight the importance of alignment, including an entire module on PI. "We introduce new hires to why they took the PI assessment, and then we show them how their profile might fit in with the rest of the rest of the business," notes Noon. This has allowed new hires to acclimate more quickly, helping them ask more questions, make fewer mistakes and forge more connections across the business, Noon adds.

Bonus! During post-hire

"When we initially chose to use PI, we used it for hiring.... We thought it was going to be a great way for us to identify the right hires. But we then found that it's also a very effective tool for assessing project teams," recalls Noon. "So when we pull project teams together on big projects, we pull out the pie* to ensure it's nicely balanced. And we'll also share with the team leader where their challenges might be and areas they may need to cover a bit more," she adds.

Once project teams are created, individual team members are more likely to seek out behavioral insights into their colleagues to optimize success. Jonathan Ribskis, the director of talent optimization at Builtech (and an internal champion for PI), recalls how he recently got a request from a project engineer (PE) to obtain the profile and relationship guide for a superintendent on their upcoming assignment. It was the first time this PE would work with this superintendent, and the PE wanted to optimize the project by understanding the superintendent's working style. In another recent situation, someone came into Ribskis' office in Charlotte — where he has an org chart of his team's PI profiles — to gut-check where someone new on their team fits in.

Saving on hiring costs with PI

Builtech folded PI Hire into its recruiting and onboarding processes in several key ways.

Getting the right butts in the right seats

PI Hire addressed Builtech's need to find the right candidates and effectively onboard them. "PI Hire enabled us to get people up and running more confidently and quicker," Noon says. That wasn't the only benefit. PI Hire led to an array of unexpected results that improved hiring and the overall employee experience at Builtech.

Bolstering self-awareness

With greater self-awareness, new hires understand where they fit within the business. "We now introduce the concept of self-awareness right at onboarding," Noon says. "We do this so new hires know where their strengths are and where they might have some challenges working with other people." Ribskis concurs, adding, "Even outside of the executive team, there's now a high degree of awareness and understanding because it's something we've really emphasized for the last few years."

Using PI profiles to make the most of team collaboration

To help team members quickly assess who has which PI Hire profile, Jonathan Ribskis, the director of talent optimization at Builtech, has an organizational chart on the wall of his office with printouts of everyone's profiles for staff to quickly reference.

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Alex Noon | Manager, Builtech

Evolving the candidate pool

One of Builtech's operations team members recently celebrated his first anniversary at the company. He was a statistics major, something Noon says Builtech would've never looked at for an open operations role a decade ago, more likely turning to an engineer or someone who graduated from a construction program. "We've evolved. The way we see it now is, we'll teach you construction, we'll teach you project management. We just want to make sure that you have the skill set, the mindset and the ability," Noon says.

Improving team dynamics

Ribskis looks back on a situation where a project team of three in Charlotte was not getting along. "It was like oil, water and tomato juice," he explained. There were generational differences, a new hire and it simply wasn't working. The team did personalized training by going through the three profiles, asking tough questions, talking through challenges and initiating follow-up. "Did we get it perfect? No, but we saw a couple of wins and created more awareness, which was the goal," he says.

"We've evolved.... We just want to make sure that you have the skill set, the mindset and the ability."

Alex Noon | Manager, Builtech

CHALLENGE #2: Enhance collaboration on the executive team

What Builtech wanted to resolve

A lack of understanding among the executive team of each other's innate abilities led to some preventable friction in management. "Before PI, we had no awareness of each other's strengths or what our blind spots were.... We were just guessing," Ribskis says. This weakened trust and led to some avoidable conflicts and miscommunication.

Phil Wesbury, the director of business development at Builtech, recalls how this led some senior leaders to believe their ideas, feelings and thought processes weren't considered. Though executives kept disagreements primarily to themselves, the tension led to evident frustration. "We had to find a way to work better together. Because although all of us were exceptional at our jobs, there was a lot of undue stress."

"There were days that we'd come in, sensing we'd have to argue 10 rounds today before we get to a solution. ... We needed to find a way to work better together because all of us were exceptional at our jobs," he says.

The executive team was the first group within Builtech to turn to PI Inspire to help bolster trust and reinforce internal alignment through behavioral insights — but they weren't the last to see the benefits.

What is PI Inspire?

The PI Inspire software provides employee-specific behavioral data so teams can:

Learn how colleagues are wired to think, work and communicate.

Resolve conflict and enable collaboration with data-driven relationship tips.

Pinpoint what motivates individuals so they can leverage their strengths and shore up caution areas.

Saia sees challenges, like those at Builtech, as opportunities to enhance working relationships. And he sees it in many companies that wind up turning to PI Inspire for help. "People can take things personally when it's not meant to be personal. It's just how that person operates. But — if you can break that down — you build strong relationships and get to work quicker," he says.

When you align how someone likes to work and communicate, and what they want to get involved with, working collaboratively and effectively becomes almost effortless for them, Saia explains. "Then, they don't have to expend energy on something unnatural to who they are and how they operate."

How PI was integrated to solve the challenge

Builtech's executive team was the first to test out PI Inspire. After witnessing positive results, the executive team introduced PI to the broader company.

In workshops

Builtech has an executive team of 10, with seven different PI profiles among them. After taking the PI assessment, they completed a "start, stop and continue" exercise — which helps execs identify what they should start, stop and continue doing — within the context of PI and how each profile was wired. "Doing that really helped us understand each other better and make decisions more quickly," Ribskis says. "It was effective, and we continued to visually show [the exercise results] every Monday in our executive meetings that first year."

In project setups

Builtech's use of PI-driven behavioral insights has extended down to the job site level. Wesbury explains how project teams on job sites across the country now take the time to huddle before a project launches to understand everyone's PI profile. This makes all project team members aware of their tendencies, strengths and communication preferences. "We've seen it allow for a higher degree of awareness and people telling others, 'This is how I would appreciate this happening.' And vice versa."

In everyday language

Diving into PI insights wasn't something that happened once a year on executive retreats but instead became part of the organization's everyday language, Ribskis explains. "We use PI in our vernacular," Wesbury agrees, "and it's been especially conducive to articulate when we know there will be a level of flexing with somebody who has to do a task that doesn't align with their personality traits."

How the results look like in practice

Reducing friction and raising satisfaction

For starters, 10/10 executive team members have been at Builtech for at least five years (and all have stuck around since the introduction of PI). "There's always friction in our business, which is absolutely healthy. But it is, without a doubt, more manageable and, quite frankly, a lot more fun since we've started using PI," Wesbury says.

Greater self-awareness among team members has allowed Builtech to avoid preventable friction and influence a decrease in attrition, which was greater than 10% annually before bringing on PI. Since implementing Builtech's new talent strategy, attrition has gone down to 6% YOY. And the financial impact?

\$180,000

saved annually

Improving collaboration

"Even though the executives were trying to solve the same problem, our solutions would often look very different," Wesbury explains. "Now, we try to align projects with the profile that would match them best ... allowing us not just to be vulnerable with each other but also come to the best solution," he says. And with better collaboration comes better results. "That's when we were the most successful and delivered the most profitable projects with good clients," Wesbury adds.

Advanced efficiency

Wesbury describes himself as being at the lower end of the spectrum of attention to detail, whereas some of his colleagues are the opposite. If they did anything in a silo, projects wouldn't get done. "Either I wouldn't have enough detail or someone else would have too much, and it would all be too slow," Wesbury explains. But, now, by knowing everyone's personality traits and what people need to work well, Wesbury and his team can put their guard down and optimize. "It's allowed all of us to work more efficiently and get everybody what they need to keep moving," he says.

Enhancing company culture

"PI helped us show up and enjoy work a little more," Wesbury says. And it's not just on the executive team. Since making smart changes, like upleveling reviews, hiring a new talent team and implementing PI, Builtech has been recognized with over half a dozen top workplace awards — from Crain's Best Places To Work in Chicago to Charlotte Business Journal's Best Places To Work. (PI may not be a silver bullet, but good businesses like Builtech see the advantages of using various methods to improve holistically.)

Ribskis, who gets access to the survey results, says, "We're getting feedback on our people's happiness versus the markets. When I see scores that are submitted anonymously that are in the mid to upper 90s out of 100, I'm just like, this is awesome." What's especially awesome? Builtech employees unanimously agree with the statement 'our senior leaders value people as their most important resource'.

Overall results of Builtech's new talent strategy

4%

decrease in attrition rates

\$180,000

saved annually in attrition costs

7

workplace awards and bolstered workplace culture

100%

of Builtech employees agree with the statement 'our senior leaders value people as their most important resource'

85%

of employees say they're 'highly engaged' with none 'disengaged'

10/10

of the executive team members have been at Builtech for at least five years (since the implementation of PI)

How long it took to integrate

The overall implementation of PI took about a year, but Builtech started to see results after just six months. Since then, it has become an integral part of how the company operates.

On hiring the right talent

"It also allows us to be highly effective. With how busy we generally are in this crazy general contracting business that we do, it allows us to come to work and have some fun," Wesbury says.

On reducing friction on the executive team

"We wanted to find a way for each of us to step out of our lane and into others and provide beneficial feedback, thoughts and constructive criticism — and we've done that with PI," Wesbury says.

And on doing it all in the world of construction

"If you look at our industry and the demographics, we're mostly male and many old-school guys who grew up working with their hands. And they're willing to listen to and talk about this behavioral 'stuff,' which I think is unique to us," Ribskis notes.

Bringing it all together

Builtech employed PI to improve how they hired, onboarded, aligned project teams, managed conflict and communicated across the company — leading to a more efficient workplace that works better together and has more fun.

Companies that want similar results should note why these solutions, among others, helped Builtech succeed. For one, leadership fully embraced PI, even at the very top. “Having our CEO say he believes in it is a huge deal,” Ribskis notes. (Builtech’s CEO was the one to announce PI to the company.) With leadership on board, embracing PI was much easier for the entire company.

Having leadership on board is critical. Having an internal champion is essential. For Builtech, it was Ribskis who embraced the role of championing PI.

Employees know he is the one to approach with questions about someone’s profile or how to manage different work styles. Having a go-to champion elevated PI within Builtech’s organization.

However, it was embedding PI into the entire employee lifecycle that brought Builtech’s investment in PI to the next level.

Today, PI is not only helping Builtech hire smarter, but they’re also helping the company retain the talent they work so hard to bring on — no matter what a fast-changing talent market and often volatile construction sector throws their way.

Sources

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About PI

The Predictive Index (PI) is an award-winning talent optimization platform. We provide data-driven HR software for hiring high performers, developing effective managers, and retaining top talent. More than 10,000 companies — including Nissan, Citizens Bank, and Subway — use PI to design great teams, make objective hiring decisions, foster engagement, and inspire greatness in their people.

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Original publication includes studioID by Industry Dive. Source research references are retained above.

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